

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
LAND NORTH OF MILKSEY LANE
GRAVELEY
NEAR STEVENAGE
HERTFORDSHIRE

Landscape & Visual Appraisal

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been appointed by Gade Homes Ltd to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal relating to *“the erection of 24 dwellings including new access and associated landscaping, parking and amenity space”* (hereafter referred to as “the Proposed Development”) on land North of Milksey Lane, Graveley, Hertfordshire (hereafter referred to as “the Site”). The location and context of the Site is illustrated on **ASP1** Site Location Plan and **ASP2** Site and Setting Plan.
- 1.2. A detailed appraisal of the surrounding study area has been undertaken using Ordnance Survey data, historical map data, local policy, and published character assessments. This has informed the on-site field analysis to identify key viewpoints, analyse the landscape character and visual environment of the local area, and determine the extent and significance of any potential landscape and visual effects.
- 1.3. This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) is not a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) but seeks to introduce the principle of development into the context of the existing character, visual environment, and landscape related policy to assess the ability of the Site to integrate future development.
- 1.4. This appraisal should be read alongside the other supporting material which accompanies this outline planning application.

2. LANDSCAPE RELATED POLICY

National Planning Policy

- 2.1. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024. The document sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The document places an emphasis on the promotion of sustainable growth whilst also protecting the environment.
- 2.2. Paragraph 7 states that: ***"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development."***
- 2.3. Paragraph 8 states that: ***"Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (...)"*** including ***"an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."***
- 2.4. Paragraph 11 states that: ***"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development."***

For plan-making this means that:

a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;

b) strategic plans should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other development, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type, or distribution of development in the plan area; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

2.5. Design is dealt with in Chapter 12 which sets out the objectives for achieving “well-designed places”. Paragraph 135 states that: **“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:**

- a) Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*

- f) Create spaces that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder and fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”*

2.6. Chapter 15 deals with the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. In particular paragraph 187, which states that: ***“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:***

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”*

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2019

- 2.7. Those categories within the NPPG that are of relevance to landscape and visual matters in relation to this site are set out below.

Design: Process and Tools

- 2.8. The NPPG states that well-designed places can be achieved by taking a pro-active and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process. The guidance sets out processes and tools that can be used through the planning system. The guidance is to be read alongside the National Design Guide.
- 2.9. As set out in paragraph 139 of the NPPF, permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents.

National Design Guide

- 2.10. The importance of design is a key focus within the guide as is the local and wider context and character of the site.

Green Infrastructure

- 2.11. The PPG highlights the multifaceted benefits delivered through Green Infrastructure and recognises how it can be used to reinforce and enhance local landscape character and contribute to a sense of place.

Landscape

- 2.12. Finally, the NPPG refers to the NPPF and the recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the provision of strategic policies to provide the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. Adverse landscape impacts are to be avoided, and mitigation measures employed where necessary.
- 2.13. The NPPF and associated Planning Practice Guidance has been of material consideration as part of our assessment of the Site and its setting, and the proposals shall take on board the overall framework guidance and principles contained within the NPPF.

Local Planning Policy

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted November 2022)

- 2.14. The North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted on 8th November 2022 and replaces the saved policies of the District Plan Second Review with Alterations. The Local Plan 2011-2031 sets out the long-term vision for the district, by identifying how and where new homes, jobs and infrastructure will be delivered. The plan encourages high-quality sustainable design and consideration for the natural environment.
- 2.15. The following policies are considered to be of some relevance to the Site and Proposed Development, in relation to landscape:
- Policy SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire
 - Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
 - Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt
 - Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability
 - Policy SP10: Healthy Communities
 - Policy SP12: Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity
 - Policy SP13: Historic Environment
 - Policy D1: Sustainable design
 - Policy NE1: Strategic green infrastructure
 - Policy NE2: Landscape
 - Policy HE1: Designated heritage assets
 - **Policy GR1: Land at Milksey Lane**
- 2.16. The Site is allocated for residential development under Policy GR1: Land at Milksey Lane, which outlines the following site-specific policy criteria:
- *Sensitive design to minimise impacts upon Graveley Conservation Area;*
 - *Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development;*
 - *Maintain Public Right of Way (Graveley 018) through the site.*

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Graveley Conservation Area Character Statement (February 2020)

- 2.17. The Site is partly washed over by the northernmost edge of the Graveley Conservation Area, which was designated by North Hertfordshire District Council in 1974. The Graveley Conservation Area Character Statement was prepared by Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions in February 2020 and provides some further context to the designated area.
- 2.18. The Character Statement describes the CA as *“predominantly rural, despite the proximity of the A1 to the west of the settlement and the much-enlarged Stevenage to the south. All of its boundary opens to agricultural land, with the exception of that part which borders development along Ashwell Common.”*
- 2.19. The Site is not considered part of any key views associated with the village which are identified within the CA Character Statement.

3. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

The Site and its Setting

- 3.1. The Application Site is an irregular parcel of land on the northern village edge of Graveley. The Site covers approximately 1.5ha and is largely undeveloped, with a ground cover of mostly scrub and grassland, and no landscape features of any note away from the boundaries. The Site was formerly in equestrian use, and includes a brick and clad stable block, and a manege to the south. The Site lies within the North Hertfordshire Council area, and its location is shown on Plan **ASP1** and **ASP2**.
- 3.2. As confirmed in Section 2, the Site is allocated for residential development under Policy GR1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.
- 3.3. The Site's eastern boundary is delineated by an established woodland belt, which separates the Site from the B197 High Street passing adjacent to the Site boundary, which will accommodate the Site access. To the immediate north of the Site is a small rectangular parcel of land containing a hay barn which comprises part of the wider GR1 allocation and is subject to an extant Change of Use for residential, under reference 20/01437/FP. Beyond the barn to the north is another established woodland belt, which separates the Site from Graveley Lane.
- 3.4. The western boundary is comprised of established coniferous trees, with occasional large oaks and little understory. Beyond this vegetation is PRow Graveley 018, which connects Graveley Lane with Oak Lane to the south, before an area of open agricultural land before meeting the busy A1(M) which passes through the localised landscape north to south, approx.150m west of the Site boundary. The existing vehicular entrance to the Site is off Milksey Lane, which passes along the Site's southern boundary and connects to the B197 to the east. To the south, beyond Milksey Lane, is Graveley House, which partly delineates the existing village edge.
- 3.5. To fully understand the history of the Site, a detailed desktop survey has been undertaken, with access to all previous planning applications taken from publicly accessible sources. While several applications have been submitted due to the previously developed nature of the Site, the following are considered relevant to the Site and Proposed Development:

- 17/04017/FP – Residential development comprising of 4 detached, 2 link detached and 4 semi-detached dwellings with detached garages and provision of new vehicular and pedestrian access off of High Street (as amended by plans received 4/4/23 and 6/11/23) **AWAITING DECISION**

Neighbouring Development

- 20/01437/FP – Change of Use of existing hay barn to one 3-bed residential dwelling including insertion of front and rear rooflights and alterations to fenestration (as amended by drawing nos. 03A & 05A) **CONDITIONAL PERMISSION**
- 12/01842/1 – Conversion of hay barn to 2 bedroom dwelling together with detached boiler house **REFUSED**

- 3.6. The Site lies outside of any qualitative landscape or townscape designations at a local or national level, and there are no statutory or non-statutory heritage assets within the Site itself, or with any visual or character connection to the Site. The southern edge of the Site is washed over by the Graveley Conservation Area.

Vegetation Cover

- 3.7. The Site does not contain any landscape features of any note away from the boundaries. The western boundary contains some large oak trees, while other statement trees nearby include two horse chestnut trees close to the Site's southern corner, at the entrance to Milksey Lane. The eastern boundary is defined by an established belt of deciduous woodland, including field maple and sycamore.
- 3.8. The ground layer is predominantly modified grassland in a moderate to poor condition, and an area of ruderal grassland to the south of the Site. Built form on the Site includes a small stable block and a manege.
- 3.9. The existing components of the Site are illustrated on **Plan ASP2** Site and Setting.

Public Rights of Way

- 3.10. The Site itself is not publicly accessible or crossed by any Public Rights of Way. There is an extensive network of PRoW in the immediate landscape, and PRoWs

Graveley 018 & Graveley 021 pass adjacent to the western and southern boundaries.

- 3.11. Graveley 014 passes adjacent to the northern boundary before becoming Wymondley 001 connecting to Roxley Manor to the north. Graveley 015 passes south from the southwestern corner of the Site, and Graveley 002 passes through the landscape to the east, connecting High Street to St Mary's Church.
- 3.12. The OS base on **Plan ASP1 and ASP2** illustrates the extent of the Public Right of Way and footpath network within the wider setting of the Site, which has informed the visual assessment.

Topography

- 3.13. The Site slopes gently from north to south, with a highest point of approx. 112m AOD on the northern boundary, to approx. 106m AOD along Milksey Lane to the south. Within the wider landscape, the land rises to the east to points of up to 150m AOD in the villages of Weston and Great Ashby, while it falls to west towards the River Hiz which passes through Hitchin at approx. 65m AOD.

Designations

- 3.14. The Site lies outside of any qualitative landscape or ecological designations at a national or local level and is approx. 6km east of the boundary of the Chilterns National Landscape (NL). The closest ecological designation is Purwell Meadows LNR, approximately 3.1km northwest of the Site.
- 3.15. The Site is partly washed over by, and lies adjacent to, the northern edge of the Graveley Conservation Area. There are several listed buildings associated with Graveley and nearby Great Wymondley including:

Grade I listed

- Church of St Mary [1102525]
- The Priory [1102499]
- Wymondley Bury [1347446]

Grade II* listed

- The Grange [1175053]
- The Manor House [1347429]
- Delamere House and barn attached on west [1175691]
- Wymondley Hall [1102501]

Selected Grade II listed

- The White House [1102532]
- Fife House and linked outbuildings to north [1102533]
- 24, 26 & 28 High Street [1175027]
- Graveley Hall [1102565]

- 3.16. It is considered that while the Site lies partly within the Graveley Conservation Area, the Site itself is a parcel of underused former equestrian land, and share little with the characteristics of the areas of Graveley which have heritage value. The Site is well contained by a robust network of vegetation at the boundaries, the gently undulating topography and the busy A1(M) road corridor passing to the west.
- 3.17. There are several scheduled monuments to the west of the Site, which are not considered to be physically or visually connected to the Site itself. The nearest is at The Priory [1013338], approximately 1km west of the Site.
- 3.18. There are no Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields within 3km of the Site.

National Landscape Character

National Character Area (NCA) 87: East Anglian Chalk

- 3.19. A landscape assessment of the local area has been carried out which seeks to identify broadly homogenous zones that can be categorised in terms of quality and character. Natural England have produced a countrywide landscape character assessment resulting in the National Character Areas (NCA's). The Site lies within the NCA 87: East Anglian Chalk. This NCA is *"a visually simple and uninterrupted landscape of smooth, rolling chalkland hills with large regular fields enclosed by low hawthorn hedges, with few trees, straight roads and expansive views to the north. The vast majority of its landscape is open countryside, under cereal production... Historically, sheep rearing and corn production have shaped the area, leading to the creation of botanically rich grasslands, which are now often small and fragmented."*
- 3.20. The National Character Area is considered a good introduction to the wider landscape, but it is far too broad and covering a far too large area to be considered accurate in relation to the Site and Proposed Development.

Local Landscape Character

Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment

- 3.21. The Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment identifies several Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) across the wider Hertfordshire County Council area. The Site lies within **LCA 216: Arlesey – Great Wymondley**, which encloses Letchworth on its south, western and northern sides.
- 3.22. The key characteristics and distinctive features of the LCA are listed below:
- ***Large flat expansive arable landscape in the north***
 - ***Rolling arable landscape of large-scale fields and with relatively few trees in the south***
 - *Core defined by the urban development of Letchworth and Hitchin*
 - *Well-wooded valley landscape of the Ivel Valley*
 - *Former mineral workings at Blue Lagoon (Bedfordshire)*

- *Golf course landscape at Letchworth Hall Hotel*
- **Historic settlements at Great Wymondley**
- *Sewage works at Pix Brook*
- **A1(M) runs parallel to eastern boundary**
- *Mill house and lake on River Ivel at Radwell*

3.23. The assessment concludes that the overall condition and robustness of the LCA is Moderate, leading to a Landscape Strategy of 'Improve and Conserve'. The following strategy and guidelines for managing change are provided:

- *Promote management of ancient woodlands to encourage a diverse woodland flora*
- *Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas*
- *Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas*
- *Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas*
- *Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges*
- *Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees*
- *Maintain and extend the rights of way network*
- *Encourage and develop the diversity of tree planting along the River Ivel*
- *In the south, encourage the development of species-rich calcareous grassland habitats*
- *Encourage woodland planting, in small copses, around the fringes of sub-urban settlements*
- *Encourage small blocks of woodland planting along the A1(M) corridor and especially around Junction 9.*

3.24. This assessment does provide a more detailed and accurate introduction and assessment of the receiving landscape; however, it is assessing a large area of local landscape and cannot be considered site specific in relation to the Site and Proposed Development. Further detail is available in **Appendix 3: Extract from Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment.**

Aspect Landscape Character Appraisal

- 3.25. Aspect considers that while the published NCA and Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment provides a good grounding for the wider receiving landscape within which the Site is set, it is considered that they represent a broad-brush approach and do not necessarily reflect the particular qualities of the application Site itself and its immediate localised setting. As such, Aspect has undertaken a more localised landscape character assessment of the application Site and the immediate surrounding landscape.
- 3.26. The Site is a parcel of predominantly undeveloped former equestrian land, containing a stable block and manege, which lies on the northern village edge of Graveley. In terms of topography, the Site falls from north to south, however remains elevated compared to the local road network, with an approx. 3-4m difference in landform perceived from the B197 to the east, and Graveley Road to the north. The Site itself is notably influenced by the busy A1(M), which passes approximately 150m west of the Site with little visual or audible screening. As such, while the Site is on the village edge and offers some long views to the west towards Great Wymondley, there is very little tranquillity associated with the Site itself. It is considered that beyond the A1(M) to the west, the Site is not readily perceived due to the sloping landform and intervening vegetation.
- 3.27. The PRoW Graveley 018 passes adjacent to the Site's western boundary before connecting with Milksey Lane and Graveley 015, which offers some open and glimpsed views into the Site due to the existing vegetation and changing topography. As distance from the Site increases to the south along Graveley 015, perception of the Site reduces as views become more filtered due to intervening vegetation.
- 3.28. Views towards the Site from the north and east are glimpsed through established woodland vegetation, with some limited intervisibility during winter months. This quickly reduces as distance increases, as layers of intervening vegetation provide the Site with increased containment.
- 3.29. The wider landscape is a mix of agricultural and horsiculture, with large areas on the village edge given over to equestrian activities and grazing, with some other isolated rural businesses including dog training and skip hire found to the north of Graveley.

3.30. In terms of landscape sensitivity, there are a number of factors that both influence and affect the value of the landscape character of the Site and its setting, and their susceptibility to change. The sensitivity of a particular landscape in relation to new development can be categorised as very high, high, medium, low or negligible. This takes into account the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of development proposed and the value attached to different landscapes by society.

3.31. In order to assess the effects on the landscape resource, the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition, provides a number of definitions for landscape susceptibility, landscape value and finally landscape sensitivity, as follows:

- **Landscape Susceptibility:** *"the ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences".*
- **Landscape Value:** *"the relative value that is attached to different landscape by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons";* and
- **Landscape Sensitivity:** *"a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor."*

3.32. In terms of landscape sensitivity, there are a number of factors that both influence and affect the value of the landscape character of the Site and its setting, and their susceptibility to change. The sensitivity of a particular landscape in relation to new development can be categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. This takes into account the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of development proposed and the value attached to different landscapes by society.

Landscape Susceptibility

- 3.33. With regard to susceptibility, this is defined by the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the specific type of development, given the existing context of the Site, how it is perceived, and whether its development would have undue negative consequences. In terms of the susceptibility of the landscape resource to accommodate change of the type proposed, it is considered that due to the previous land use and existing built form, and established network of vegetation adjacent to the Site boundaries, that the development of the Site would not cause a notable impact and will require little additional landscape mitigation. The established vegetation structure creates a robust external edge to the Site and forms a defensible boundary between the Site and wider agricultural and equestrian countryside to the north and east.
- 3.34. While the Site is not publicly accessible or crossed by any PRoW, it does contribute to views associated with nearby PRoWs Graveley 018, Graveley 015 and Graveley 002. Views of the Site from PRoW Graveley 018 are most sensitive, as it passes adjacent to the western boundary of the Site and will offer open views into the Site where it joins Milksey Lane. It is considered that due to the existing urbanising influences exerted upon the PRoW, it can be comfortably accommodated within the Site, rather than visually or physically separated to retain any tranquillity or visual amenity associated with the PRoW itself.
- 3.35. The proposed entrance onto the B197 High Street would lead to the removal of some of the established woodland belt to accommodate, while allowing some filtered views into the Site from specific points, and result in an additional vehicular access to the B197. This would be readily perceived and would result in a change to the existing village edge.
- 3.36. The Site contains no internal landscape features of any note, limited to a series of statement trees associated with the boundary vegetation, including some oaks along the western boundary, horse chestnuts at the entrance to Milksey Lane, and some examples of field maple and sycamore along the eastern boundary. Such natural features would typically be susceptible to the nature of the change proposed, however the boundary vegetation is to be largely retained and enhanced (with the exception of a small number of removals to accommodate the revised access). As

such, it is clear that there is potential to develop the Site for residential use while ensuring retention and enhancement of the existing network of vegetation.

- 3.37. The southern extent of the Site is washed over by the Graveley Conservation Area, however it is considered that the Site is physically and visually separated from the Conservation Area and associated key views, due to the change in landform and established network of vegetation at the Site boundaries.
- 3.38. It is noted that an application for a large solar installation for up to 88ha of panels has been approved to the immediate west of the A1(M) under reference 21/03380/FP, which will introduce a significant urbanising influence upon the agricultural land between Graveley and Great Wymondley.
- 3.39. There are several urbanising influences in the localised landscape, including the busy A1(M) approx. 150m west of the Site, and the B197 adjacent to the eastern boundary, which provides a commuter route into nearby Stevenage. There is little tranquillity associated with the Site and localised landscape due to these factors, and as such Aspect concludes that the susceptibility of the landscape resource to change of the type proposed is considered **Medium / Low**.

Landscape Value

3.40. GLVIA3 sets out at Box 5.1 a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. This has been reviewed and updated in the light of the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 '*Assessing landscape value outside national designations*' (TGN 02/21) and the below takes into account the updated guidance. These factors include:

- Natural heritage (ecological, geological, geomorphological which contributes positively to landscape).
- Cultural heritage (archaeological, historical or cultural which contributes positively to landscape).
- Landscape condition (physical condition and intactness of landscape elements / structure).
- Associations (landscape connected with notable people, events or with the arts).
- Distinctiveness (strong landscape character, features, making a contribution to sense of identity).
- Recreational (offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important).
- Perceptual (Scenic) (visual quality / appeals to the senses).
- Perceptual (Wildness & tranquillity) (perceptual value of landscape, tranquillity, wildness and remoteness).
- Functional (landscapes performing clearly identifiable functions).

3.41. Table 1 below seeks to assess the value of the Site (including the immediate adjoining localised landscape setting) based on the amended Box 5.1 & TGN 02/21 criteria.

3.42. Table 1: Assessment of Landscape Value of the Site and its Setting

Factor	Definition	Assessment of Value
Natural Heritage	<i>Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape</i>	Low – The Site itself has not internal landscape features of note, with some development within the Site including a single-storey stable block and a manege. Ground covering consists largely of scrub and unimproved grassland, which has little landscape value, while providing some habitat and biodiversity opportunities. The boundary vegetation is in generally good condition, and provides the Site with adequate visual and physical containment from the nearby road networks and other properties associated with Graveley. The Site is not washed over by any qualitative landscape or ecological designations at a national or local level.
Cultural Heritage	<i>Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape</i>	Medium – The Site does not contain any listed buildings or contribute notably to the setting of any listed buildings or heritage assets. While the southern edge of the Site is washed over by the Graveley Conservation Area, the Site itself is considered separate from the two main conservation areas associated with the High Street and Church of St Mary, and the Site does not contribute to any of the key views identified in the Graveley Conservation Area Character Statement.
Landscape Condition	<i>Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure</i>	Medium / Low – The Site contains no internal landscape features of note, with the most notable elements on Site being the built form of a single-storey stable block and manege. The statement trees close to the Site boundaries including some oak trees along the western boundary and a line of maples and sycamore along the eastern boundary, which are generally considered to be in good condition.
Associations	<i>Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts</i>	None – There are no known literary or historic associations with the Site or setting.
Distinctiveness	<i>Landscape that has a strong sense of identity</i>	Low – The Site is not typical of the surrounding area, which is characterised by large scale arable farmland, interspersed with large parcels of land in equestrian use. Some smaller grazing areas are noted within the centre of Graveley. The Site does not contain any landscape features which are rare within the wider landscape area or the village edge of Graveley.

Recreational	<i>Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of the landscape is important</i>	High – The Site is not publicly accessible, however the PRoW Graveley passes adjacent to the Site's southern and western boundaries, while Graveley 015 joins 018 at the Site boundary, and Graveley 002 passes close to the northern boundary. The Site comprises part of the views associated with these PRoWs, some of which comprise part of the Hertfordshire Way LDR.
Perceptual (Scenic)	<i>Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense</i>	Medium / Low - Internally, the Site contains no landscape features of any note, although some isolated examples of oaks and sycamore with some landscape value exist at the Site boundaries. The existing development within the Site somewhat detracts from the visual amenity associated with the immediate and localised landscape. While the Site offers some longer views to the west and southwest from specific points, the highly contained nature of the Site ensures it is not readily perceived from the wider landscape beyond the village edge. The Site does not form a notable part of any of the identified key views of Graveley, as illustrated in the Graveley Conservation Area Character Statement.
Perceptual (Wildness & Tranquillity)	<i>Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies</i>	None – The Site is heavily influenced by traffic noise associated with the busy A1(M), approx. 150m west, and traffic travelling along the B197 High Street, adjacent to the Site's eastern boundary. The Site is not closely associated with dark skies.
Functional	<i>Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape</i>	Low – The Site itself contains no internal features which contribute to the localised landscape, and the Site is not washed over by any qualitative landscape designations. The ground is largely scrub and unimproved grassland which offers little landscape value. There is limited hedgerow associated with the Site, and understory is generally less dense. The established woodland belts adjacent to the boundaries contribute somewhat to the local Green Infrastructure network.

- 3.43. The Site is a largely undeveloped parcel of former equestrian land on the village edge of Graveley. The Site has no internal landscape features of note, with some statement trees along the eastern and western boundaries including oak and sycamore, which have some landscape value. The woodland belts contribute somewhat to the local Green Infrastructure network, offering nesting opportunities

for birds, however the lack of understory offers limited habitat opportunities for small mammals and invertebrates, while offering some intervisibility between the Site and the local road and PRoW network. The Site is barely perceived from within the wider landscape to the north and east, while the sloping topography ensures the Site is largely imperceptible from the west. While the southern edge of the Site is washed over by the edge of the Graveley Conservation Area, it is physically and visually separate from the key views and areas identified within the Graveley Conservation Area Character Statement. The Site is not publicly accessible, and while it contributes to some views associated with the local PRoW network, these are mostly glimpses or oblique views due to the established network of vegetation and changing topography.

- 3.44. As such, given the assessment of the above, the Site itself is considered to be of **Medium / Low landscape value**, in relation to 'Box 5.1' of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA 3), and supported by LI TGN 02/21: *Assessing landscape value outside national designations*.
- 3.45. In summary, the medium / low value and medium / low susceptibility of the Site, it is concluded that the overall site sensitivity to the nature of the change proposed is **Medium / Low**.

4. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSALS

- 4.1. The proposed development is *“the erection of 24 dwellings including new access and associated landscaping, parking and amenity space”* on land north of Milksey Lane, Graveley, near Stevenage.
- 4.2. The proposed development seeks to create a new entrance from B197 High Street to the east, while retaining PRow Graveley 018 adjacent to the western and southern boundaries.
- 4.3. The proposals seek to demolish the existing office stable block and remove the manege, introducing 24 new dwellings with maximum ridge heights of 8.95m

Landscape Strategy and Mitigations

- 4.4. The Site contains no landscape features of note, limited to the established trees and boundary vegetation which will be largely retained and enhanced, except for some limited tree removals to accommodate the new access from B197 High Street.
- 4.5. Additional tree planting will be provided within the Site itself, including native street trees and some further isolated tree planting within open space areas. An attenuation basin is proposed towards the southern end of the development, using the existing gently sloping topography of the Site.
- 4.6. Mixed native hedgerow adjacent to the internal roads will provide further green connections and ecological corridors through the Site, ensuring that small mammals have foraging and habitat opportunities within the Proposed Development itself. In open areas, existing grassland will be retained and overseeded with a wildflower seed mix, enhancing the quality of grassland and providing improved habitat opportunities for invertebrates and small mammals.
- 4.7. Further details are included in Plan **ASP5** Landscape Strategy Plan.

5. POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 5.1. The Landscape and Visual Appraisal does not include a fully detailed assessment of effects but seeks to assess the principle of introducing the development of the site for residential use, accounting for the Site's allocation under **Policy GR1: Land North of Milksey Lane** of the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031. This will be considered within the context of the receiving landscape and visual environment as identified within the baseline assessment.

Effect upon Landscape Character

- 5.2. The Site is characterised by its edge of settlement location, and forms part of the transition between the more developed settlement edge of the village and the predominantly agricultural landscape to the north and west of Graveley. The Site lies within the setting of several Public Rights of Way, including PRoWs Graveley 002, Graveley 018 and Graveley 015 to the immediate north and west, and contributes partly to recreation opportunities locally.
- 5.3. Approximately 150m west of the Site is the busy A1(M), which provides a notably detracting feature in the localised landscape and introduces high volumes of vehicle movements and associated traffic noise to an otherwise semi-rural location. The Site is allocated for residential development under Policy GR1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, which partly establishes the principle of development in this location, along with its removal from the Green Belt.
- 5.4. The Site is identified as falling within **LCA 216: Arlesey – Great Wymondley** of the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment. The list below considers each of the landscape characteristics relevant to the Site against the Proposed Development:

a) Large flat expansive arable landscape in the north

The Site lies adjacent to a linear and somewhat isolated parcel of arable farmland, which also lies adjacent to the existing developed edge of Graveley and was formerly part of a wider arable allocation which has been cut off since the construction of the A1(M), which is a significant visual and physical feature in the localised landscape. This linear parcel of arable farmland is adjacent to

development on several roads to the south, including Turf Lane, Oak Lane and Ashwell Common.

The Site itself is not large, or expansive arable farmland, and is a smaller irregular parcel of highly enclosed former equestrian land, and historic mapping illustrates that the Site has been separated from the wider arable network to the west by Milksey Lane and the associated PRow since at least 1900.

It is considered that the introduction of built form in this already well enclosed location would not have a significant impact upon the adjacent expansive arable landscape, as development of this size and scale would not introduce any vertical elements which exceed the existing treeline, and longer views west from the site and PRow Graveley 018 towards Great Wymondley would be retained.

b) Rolling arable landscape of large-scale fields and with relatively few trees in the south

Similarly to the above, the Site does not comprise part of the rolling arable landscape and is characterised by its relationship with the village edge, as well as with the wider arable landscape to the west. The Site is highly contained by a robust and established network of coniferous and deciduous vegetation, and is an irregular parcel of land which is largely incongruous with the wider network of regular arable farmland outside Graveley.

Graveley has several small parcels of woodland, with some isolated areas of woodland prevalent south of the village, and a notable parcel of woodland to the north of the site. The Proposed Development seeks to introduce an increased quantum of tree planting across the Site, which would be in keeping with the well wooded vernacular of the immediate and localised landscape.

c) Historic settlements at Great Wymondley

The Site lies approx. 1.5km west of the closest heritage asset on the southeastern side of Great Wymondley, and due to the sloping topography and vegetation associated with the A1(M), there is considered not physical or visual

link between the Site and any historic features in Great Wymondley. As such, the proposals will lead to no significant impact upon this landscape characteristic.

d) A1(M) runs parallel to eastern boundary

The A1(M) passes approx. 150m west of the Site and exerts a major urbanising influence over the Site, which severely detracts from an otherwise relatively peaceful and tranquil landscape offering some long views towards and across Great Wymondley to the west. The introduction of increased vehicle movements by way of the development would not lead to any discernible increase in noise or any further reduction in tranquillity.

- 5.5. The Site has most recently been in equestrian use, which is fairly commonplace around Graveley, with several parcels of land on the village edge and within the village itself given over for equestrian activity. It is considered that the loss of a now abandoned stable block and manege can be accommodated within the village edge without causing any discernible harm to the localised or wider landscape character.
- 5.6. In conclusion, it is considered that the development can be incorporated into this location without having a significant impact upon the characteristics which comprise the localised and wider landscape.

Effect upon Visual Environment

- 5.7. In reviewing the effects upon the visual environment, the location of the proposed development, being on the village edge within a well vegetated location, as well as the topography associated with the localised and wider landscape, and intervening layers of vegetation present at the Site boundaries and in the intervening landscape, ensures that intervisibility with sensitive receptors is highly localised. The notable urbanising influence in the area is the A1(M) approximately 150m west of the Site, which provides the Site with visual containment and is a dividing element in the landscape. The Visual Assessment can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 5.8. **Viewpoint 1** illustrates a short length view towards the Site from the south along the B197 High Street, including the southern extent of PRow Graveley 018 along Milksey Lane. This viewpoint shows that views towards the Site would be filtered by the existing vegetation which comprises the southern and eastern boundaries, and while there may be some glimpses of upper floors and rooftops, as the Site is located on the village edge, it would be perceived similarly to other properties in the localised landscape. Development would be set back from the existing vegetated edge of the Site with a substantial landscape buffer including access road and hedgerows, which would further limit intervisibility between the Proposed Development and receptors at this location.
- 5.9. **Viewpoint 2** shows the Site from the nearby PRow Graveley 024, which joins PRows Graveley 015 and 018 at the junction illustrated in the foreground. This view illustrates the currently open views into the Site and the extent of the existing built form. The existing boundary vegetation is to be largely retained and enhanced as part of the proposed landscape strategy, ensuring that post-development, while some views into the Site will be retained, the PRow will be incorporated along the edge of the Site, and a high-quality landscape design will aim to retain and enhance the existing visual amenity associated with the PRow network. It is considered that the Site is limited in its visual value in its current state, with views across the wider agricultural landscape towards Great Wymondley to the west considered the views associated with the Site which should be retained where possible.
- 5.10. **Viewpoint 3** illustrates the view of the Site from PRow Graveley 015, adjacent to the northwestern corner. Views from this point are largely limited to obscured glimpses, due to the established vegetation network along the western boundary,

leaving some slightly more open views towards the northern edge of the Site. The adjacent plot to the north which currently contains a two-storey barn, is subject to an extant Change of Use for residential, under reference 20/01437/FP, and will be mostly separated from the Proposed Development by a mixed native hedgerow along the northern boundary. Post-development, this will ensure further visual containment from this viewpoint and will ensure that views of the Site will be more obscured, and where seen, will be viewed within a village edge location, with existing housing associated with Ashwell Common visible beyond.

- 5.11. **Viewpoint 4** illustrates views towards the Site from PRoW Graveley 014, which passes along Graveley Lane to the immediate north of the Site. The view clearly shows the elevation change between the road and the Site and offers glimpsed views towards the barn to the north, through a densely populated woodland buffer, which will not be subject to the development proposals. Due to the changing topography and the size, scale and siting of the Proposed Development, there would be no change to the visual environment experienced along Graveley Lane.
- 5.12. **Viewpoint 5** illustrates a view towards the Site from the immediate east, off the B197 High Street, and shows how the Site is more readily perceived from this point than in **VP4** above. The vegetated boundary is slightly less dense at this point and illustrates the approximate location of the proposed vehicular entrance for the Proposed Development. The Site remains elevated above the level, and the slight change in relief provides the Site and Proposed Development with some visual containment. During summer months, when tree cover and vegetation is denser, views will be heavily filtered and barely perceived by receptors, which are limited to road users at this point. Landscape proposals seek to enhance the eastern boundary where possible, and the inclusion of further trees and hedgerows within the Proposed Development will provide further visual containment, as vegetation establishes and matures. It is accepted that a new vehicular entrance will result in a degree of change to the visual environment but is not considered incongruous from a landscape perspective.
- 5.13. **Viewpoints 6, 7 & 8** illustrate medium-length views from the localised landscape to the south, west and north of the Site, and show that the Proposed Development will not be readily perceived, away from some oblique and filtered glimpsed views, from the local PRoW and road network. The changing elevation to the north of the Site, along with the established woodland block to the north of Graveley 014 and the size and scale of the proposed dwellings, ensure that the Site is provided with excellent

visual containment from VPs 6 & 8. Some highly filtered views of the development could be visible from VP7 during winter months, however this would not be out of character, as the PRoW connects to the wider village to the south and would be perceived as a logical and natural extension of the village to the north. The wider rural views looking west towards Great Wymondley will remain unaffected by the Proposed Development.

- 5.14. **Viewpoints 9, 10, 11 & 12** are medium-length taken from within and around the village of Graveley to the south and east, illustrating that the views towards the Site are heavily filtered by several layers of intervening topography and built form. The Site is not readily perceived, even during winter months as illustrated, and due to the size and scale of the Proposed Development, including ridge heights of between 8.2m and 8.95m, the proposals will not be readily perceived. **VP11** closely resembles Key View 1 identified within the Graveley Conservation Area Character Statement and illustrates that the Proposals will result in no change to the visual environment by way of development.
- 5.15. **Viewpoints 13 & 14** are longer views from the wider landscape illustrating elevated views towards the Site from the south and east. Both views illustrate the generally well contained nature of the wider landscape, with linear wooded belts and woodland blocks providing the built form within the landscape with some visual containment. **VP13** illustrates that longer views towards Hitchin are available from elevated points, while the village of Graveley is largely not perceived, limited to some glimpses of rooftops within the trees. **VP14** illustrates a similar visual experience, with some individual properties visible within the heavily wooded backdrop, while most of the village remains visually contained.
- 5.16. The visual assessment illustrates that the Site is visually well-contained from any publicly accessible viewpoints within the localised and wider landscape, with the only impact on the visual environment identified as being within the Site itself and the immediate PRoW and road network, which is typical of any development. As distance increases, the impact upon the visual environment by way of the Proposed Development rapidly reduces, ensuring that the Proposed Development would not be readily perceived within the wider landscape. The Site contains no landscape features of note away from the established boundary vegetation, which will be mostly retained and enhanced except for a small section to the east to be removed for the proposed vehicular access. The changing topography and existing and proposed landscape mitigation seek to reduce the visual impact of the Proposals

from the adjacent road and PRow network, providing high levels of visual containment, ensuring that the Proposed Development is characteristic of the receiving landscape, and that identified locally important views are unaffected by development.

- 5.17. Overall, it is considered from a visual perspective, that the Site has the capacity to accommodate the proposed development without causing any significant long-term detriment to visual amenity in the localised or wider landscape.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1. Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been appointed by Gade Homes Ltd to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal relating to *“the erection of 24 dwellings including new access and associated landscaping, parking and amenity space”* on land north of Milksey Lane, Graveley, Hertfordshire. The location and context of the Site is illustrated on **ASP1 Site Location Plan** and **ASP2 Site and Setting Plan**.
- 6.2. A detailed appraisal of the surrounding study area has been undertaken using Ordnance Survey data, historical map data, local policy, and published character assessments. This has informed the on-site field analysis to identify key viewpoints, analyse the landscape character and visual environment of the local area, and determine the extent and significance of any potential landscape and visual effects.
- 6.3. In relation to impact upon the visual environment, the photographic record illustrates that the Site is visually well-contained from most publicly accessible viewpoints by the established network of woodland and vegetation which is typical of the wider landscape. The most notable change will be perceived from PRoW Graveley 018, which passes adjacent to the Site’s eastern and southern boundary (along Milksey Lane) and will be retained alongside the development, as confirmed in Policy GR1 of the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan. A landscape buffer will reduce the impact from this point. It is also accepted that a minor change to the visual environment will be experienced from the adjacent B197 High Street to the east, where receptors are road users passing in vehicles and less sensitive to a degree of change.
- 6.4. In relation to landscape character, it is considered that the Site lies on the village edge of Graveley, and while washed over by ‘LCA 216 Arlesey – Great Wymondham’ of the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, the Site displays few of the characteristics of the wider LCA due to its village edge location and previously equestrian land use. Due to urbanising influences within the wider landscape including the busy A1(M) road corridor approx. 150m west of the Site, it is considered that the development can be incorporated into this location without resulting in a significant impact upon any of the published characteristics which comprise the localised and wider landscape.
- 6.5. The development proposals have been sensitively designed to respond to the localised context and ensure they do not result in significant harm to the landscape

character, the localised or wider visual environment, and the Conservation Area covering the historic centre of Graveley.

- 6.6. It is considered that the proposals are policy compliant with the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted November 2022), including Site specific guidance included within **Policy GR1: Land North of Milksey Lane**, and national policy and guidance as outlined in the NPPF and NPPG.
- 6.7. In summary, it is considered that the Proposed Development is an appropriate development of a Site allocated for residential development on the village edge of Graveley. The allocation helps to establish the principle of development in this location, and while the Proposed Development seeks to introduce an increased number of dwellings against the allocation, the Proposed Development is still of a size and scale which is considered acceptable from a landscape and visual perspective.

ASPECT PLANS

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- Key:
- Application Site Boundary
 - Footpath
 - Bridleway
 - National Trail/ Long Distance Route
 - Motorway
 - Main Road
 - Cycle Trail
 - Contours



REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				

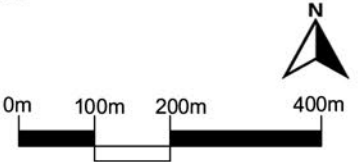
aspect landscape planning

TITLE
Land North of Milksey Lane, Graveley
Site Location Plan

CLIENT
Gade Homes

SCALE 1:20,000@ A3	DATE NOV 2024	DRAWN BS	CHK'D JJ
DRAWING NUMBER 8613 / ASP1 / SLP		REVISION	

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Key:

- Application Site Boundary
- Public Rights of Way
- Long Distance Routes
- Roads
- Woodland

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				

aspect landscape planning

TITLE
Land North of Milksey Lane, Graveley
Site & Setting Plan

CLIENT
Gade Homes

SCALE 1:10,000@ A3	DATE NOV 2024	DRAWN BS	CHK'D JJ
DRAWING NUMBER 8613 / ASP2 / SS		REVISION	

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Key:

- Application Site Boundary
- Public Rights of Way
- Long Distance Routes
- Roads
- Woodland
- Ancient Woodland
- Listed Buildings
- Green Belt
- Scheduled Monuments
- Conservation Area

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

REVISIONS

aspect landscape planning

TITLE
Land North of Milksey Lane, Graveley
Designations Plan

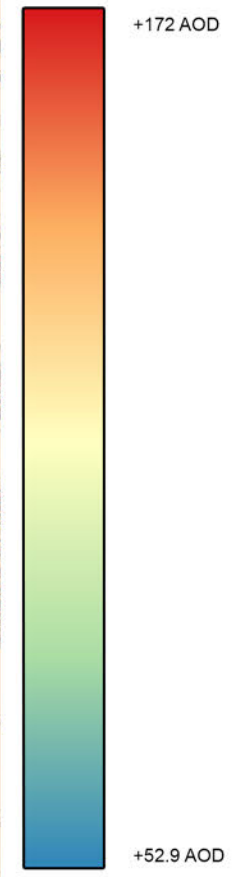
CLIENT
Gade Homes

SCALE 1:20,000@ A3	DATE NOV 2024	DRAWN BS	CHK'D JJ
DRAWING NUMBER 8613 / ASP3 / DP	REVISION		

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Key:
 Application Site Boundary



REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

aspect landscape planning

TITLE
Land North of Milksey Lane, Graveley
Topography Plan

CLIENT
Gade Homes

SCALE 1:20,000@ A3	DATE NOV 2024	DRAWN BS	CHK'D JJ
DRAWING NUMBER 8613 / ASP4 / TP	REVISION		

APPENDIX 1

ASPECT LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT METHODOLOGY

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- 1.1. The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment have jointly published Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition 2013 (GLVIA3) that gives guidance on carrying out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), either as a standalone appraisal or part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This methodology takes on board the above guidance.
- 1.2. When assessing character within an urban context, this methodology can be applied to Townscape Assessments and how the development will affect the elements that make up the townscape and its distinctive character.
- 1.3. The main stages of the LVIA process are outlined below. This process will identify and assess the potential effects of a development on the landscape resource and the visual environment.

1. Baseline study

Landscape

- Define the scope of the assessment.
- Outline the planning policy context, including any landscape designations.
- Establish the landscape baseline through a site visit and an assessment of published Landscape Character Assessments to identify the value and susceptibility of the landscape resource (receptor), at community, local, national or international levels where appropriate.

Visual

- Define the scope of the assessment.
- Identify the extent of visual receptors within the study area, with the use of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) where appropriate, and establish the number and sensitivity of the representative viewpoint and/or groups of people (receptors) within the study area whose views may be altered as a result of the proposals.

2. Project description

The baseline study highlights clear opportunities and constraints for the integration of the proposals into the receiving environment. The aspects of the scheme at each phase that will potentially give rise to effects on the landscape and visual amenity will need identifying. At this time, the proposals can be modified to ensure that further mitigation measures are incorporated into the design as a response to the local landscape and visual environment.

3. Description of Effects

The level of effect on both landscape and visual receptors should be identified in respect of the different components of the proposed development. In order to assess the significance of the effect on the receiving environment, it is necessary to consider the **magnitude**, i.e. the degree of change, together with the **sensitivity** of the receptor.

This will identify whether the effects are:

Adverse or Beneficial - beneficial effects would typically occur where a development could positively contribute to the landscape character or view. Neutral effects would include changes that neither add nor detract from the quality and character of an area or view. Adverse effects would typically occur where there is loss of landscape elements, or the proposal detracts from the landscape quality and character of an area or view.

Direct or Indirect – A direct effect will be one where a development will affect a view or the character of an area, either beneficially or adversely. An indirect effect will occur as a result of associated development i.e. a development may result in an increase of traffic on a particular route.

Short, Medium or Long Term – this relates to the expected duration and magnitude of a development. Within this assessment the potential effects are assessed during the Construction Phase, then at Years 1 and 10, following completion of the development.

Reversible or Irreversible – can the resulting effect of a development be mitigated or not, and whether the result of the mitigation is beneficial or adverse.

4. Significance of Effects (EIA only)

A final judgment on whether the effect is likely to be significant, as required by the Regulations. The summary should draw out the key issues and outline the scope for reducing any negative / adverse effects. Mitigation measures need to be identified that may reduce the final judgement on the significance of any residual negative effects in the long term.

Assessing effects

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.4. The sensitivity of a particular landscape in relation to new development is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. This takes into account the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of development proposed and the value attached to different landscapes by society. The following table explains each threshold and the factors that make up the degree of sensitivity.

Table 1: Landscape Sensitivity Thresholds

Sensitivity	Definition
High	Landscape resource where there is a high susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of high value, have a high degree of intimacy, strong landscape structure, relatively intact and contain features worthy of protection. Townscapes may include a high proportion of historic assets. Typical examples may be of National or County importance e.g. within the setting of National Parks, National Landscapes (AONB's), Conservation Areas etc.
Medium	Landscape resource where there is a medium susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of medium value, good landscape structure, with some detracting features or evidence of recent change. Townscapes may include a proportion of historic assets or of cultural value locally. Typical examples may be designated for their value at District level.
Low	Landscape resource where there is a low susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of low value, and contain evidence of previous landscape change.
Negligible	Landscape resource where there is little or no susceptibility to change. Typical landscapes are likely to be degraded, of weak landscape structure, intensive land uses, and require landscape restoration.

Visual Sensitivity

- 1.5. The sensitivity of the visual receptor will be assessed against the magnitude of visual change, and is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible. Each receptor should be assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views.

Table 2: Visual Sensitivity Thresholds

Sensitivity	Definition
High	Viewers on public rights of way whose prime focus is on the landscape around and are often very aware of its value. Occupiers of residential properties with primary views affected by the development. Examples include users of National Trails, Long Distance Routes or Sustrans cycle routes, or within the setting of a listed building.
Medium	Viewers engaged in outdoor recreation with some appreciation of the landscape, occupiers of residential properties with oblique views affected by the development, and users of rural lanes and roads. Examples include viewers within moderate quality landscapes, local recreation grounds, and outdoor pursuits.
Low	Viewers engaged in outdoor sport or recreation whose prime focus is on their activity, or those passing through the area on main transport routes whose attention is focused away from an appreciation of the landscape.
Negligible	Viewers whose attention is focused on their work or activity, and not susceptible to changes in the surrounding landscape.

Effect Magnitude

- 1.6. The magnitude of change relates to the degree in which proposed development alters the fabric of the landscape character or view. This change is categorised as high, medium, low, or negligible.

Table 3: Magnitude of Change

Magnitude	Effect Definition
High	Change resulting in a high degree of deterioration or improvement, or introduction of prominent new elements that are considered to make a major alteration to a landscape or view.
Medium	Change resulting in a moderate degree of deterioration or improvement or constitutes a perceptible change within a landscape or view.
Low	Change resulting in a low degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape or view or constitutes only a minor component within a landscape or view.
Negligible	Change resulting in a barely perceptible degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape or view.
No Change	It is also possible for a landscape or view to experience no change due to being totally compatible with the local character or not visible due to intervening structures or vegetation.

Significance Threshold

- 1.7. The magnitude of change is then considered against the sensitivity of the landscape resource as a receptor or the existing character of the panorama / view. In formulating the significance of effect, reasoned professional judgement is required which is explained within the assessment. This is carried out both in terms of the predicted effects on landscape character or on visual amenities. The significance thresholds are predicted as Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible and None, and can be either beneficial or adverse. Unless otherwise stated, all effects are predicted in the winter months. The extent of mitigation measures should be clearly stated, and in the case of planting proposals, the contribution to reducing adverse effects should be demonstrated at different stages (construction stage, operational stage year 0, and year 10).

Table 4: Significance of Effect

Significance	Threshold Definition
Major	A high magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view, that has little or no ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a damaged landscape or view.
Moderate	A medium magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that may have the ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
Minor	A low magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that has the ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
Negligible	A negligible magnitude of change that has little effect on a landscape or view that has the ability to accommodate change.
None	It is also possible for a magnitude of change to occur that results in a neutral effect significance due to the change being compatible with local character or not visible.

- 1.8. The significance of the effect is measured on the ability of a landscape or view to accommodate the change. In assessing the significance of effects, the following matrix will be used to determine the significance thresholds, through determining the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change.
- 1.9. In terms of assessing whether the effects are significant or otherwise, it is noted that para 5.56 of GLVIA3 states that there are no “hard and fast rules” about what makes a significant effect. For the purposes of this assessment significant landscape or visual effects are those effects considered to be greater than moderate, shaded below in Table 5.

Table 5: Measuring Significance of Effect

	Sensitivity of Receptors				
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of Change	High	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
	Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
	Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible/ None

- 1.10. It should be noted that where there is no perceptible change in terms of the effect magnitude regardless of the sensitivity of the receptor, the significance of the effect on a landscape or view will be none.
- 1.11. A written statement summarising the significance of effects is provided, assisted by the tables and matrices. The final judgement relies on professional judgement that is reasonable, based on clear and transparent methods, suitable training and experience, and a detached and dispassionate view of the development in the final assessment.

Assessing cumulative effects

- 1.12. Cumulative effects are additional effects caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments. This can be cumulative landscape effects on the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or cumulative visual effects caused by two or more developments being visible from one viewpoint and/or sequence of views. The scope of cumulative effects should be agreed at the outset to establish what schemes are relevant to the assessment, and what planning stage is appropriate. It is generally considered that existing and consented developments and those for which planning applications have been submitted but not yet determined should be included.

APPENDIX 2

VISUAL ASSESSMENT



NOTES:
Based upon the Ordnance Survey map with permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, & Crown Copyright.
Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd, West Court, Handwick Business Park, Nural Way, Banbury OX16 2AF.
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0m 50m 100m 200m

Key:

- Site Boundary
- Viewpoint Location
- Public Rights of Way
- Long Distance Routes

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				
aspect landscape planning				
TITLE				
Land North of Milksey Lane, Graveley Viewpoint Location Plan				
CLIENT				
Gade Homes				
SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D	
1:5,000 @ A3	DEC 2024	BS	AJ	
DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION			
8613 / VLP				

Approximate extent of site



Milksey Lane

Site located beyond
intervening vegetation

High Street

Public Right of Way
(GRAVELEY 015)



Distance to Site: 0.01 km
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 523087, N 228074
Date & time of photograph: 05/12/2024 10:35
AOD & Viewing height: c. 104.5m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 1 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 1 (Single Frame Image)

Site's existing western
vegetation boundary

Site

High Street



Public Right of Way
(GRAVELEY 015)

Existing building within Site

Milksey Lane



Distance to Site: 0.01 km
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 522984, N 228165
Date & time of photograph: 05/12/2024 10:39
AOD & Viewing height: c. 109.2m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 2 (Panorama Image for Context Only)

Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 2 (Single Frame Image)

Approximate extent of site



Existing building to the north of site

Site located beyond intervening vegetation



Distance to Site: 0.01 km
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 522957, N 228301
Date & time of photograph: 05/12/2024 10:48
AOD & Viewing height: c. 111m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 3 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 3 (Single Frame Image)

Approximate extent of site



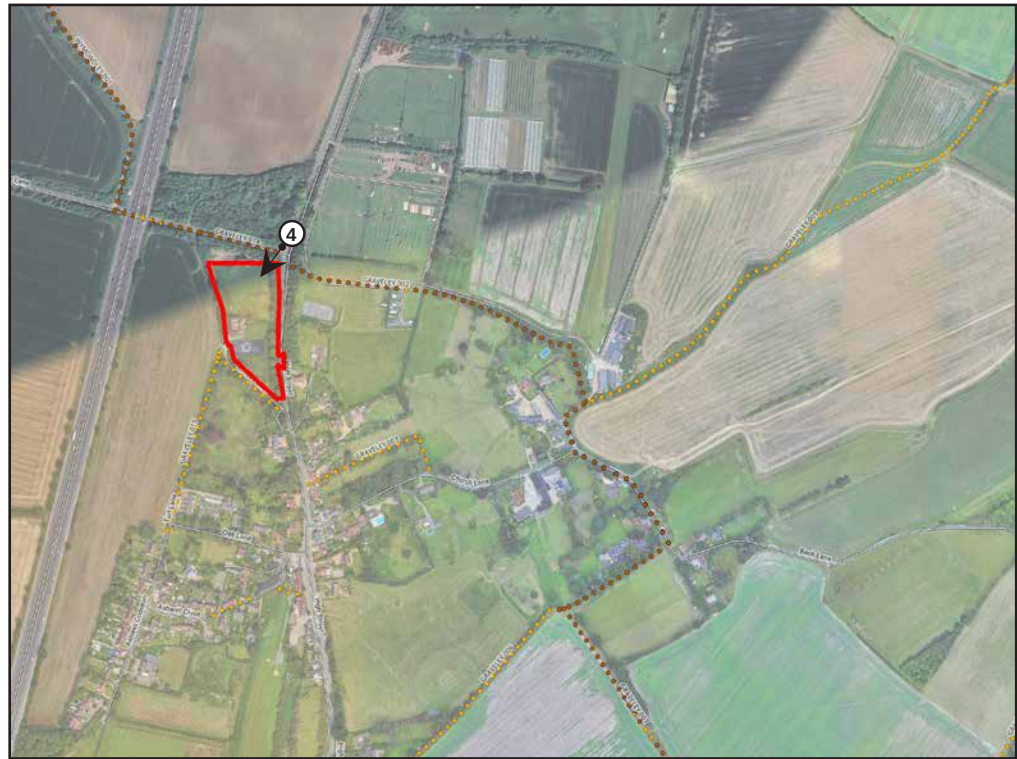
High Street

Public Right of Way
(GRAVELEY 002)

Site located beyond
intervening vegetation

Graveley Lane

Existing building
to the north of site



Distance to Site: 0.03 km
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 523084, N 228331
Date & time of photograph: 05/12/2024 11:09
AOD & Viewing height: c. 113.1m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 4 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 4 (Single Frame Image)

Site located beyond
intervening vegetation



Milksey Lane

High Street



Distance to Site: 0.01 km
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 523083, N 228190
Date & time of photograph: 05/12/2024 13:12
AOD & Viewing height: c. 107.9m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 5 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.